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# Maine Library Commission Minutes, November 29, 2011

Maine Library Commission

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# Maine Library Commission Minutes November 29, 2011 Meeting

**In attendance:** Inese Gruber, Dick Thompson, Molly Larson, Moorhead Kennedy, Jamie Ritter, Beth Edmonds, Charlie Campo, Liz Doucette, Kathy Brunjes, Art Turley, Barbara McDade (via telephone), Steve Podgajny

**Also in attendance:** James Jackson Sanborn, Linda Lord, Stephanie Zurinski, Susan Preece, Janet McKenney, Pam Goucher, Peggy OKane, Valerie Osborne

Beth Edmonds called the meeting to order at 12:59pm.

## State Librarian Report - Linda Lord

- Commissioner Millett approved replacing the Director of Reader and Information Services position. The job description went to Human Resources today. We're hoping to have the position filled by mid-February.
- The SMLD Consultant position has been resolved. We received permission to offer the job to the second candidate which was done yesterday. The candidate accepted and will hopefully start on January 2 after giving 30 days notice to her current employer.
- Interviews for the Planning and Research Associate/Technology Consultant position will be next Monday and Tuesday.
- State legislation update: Bill 1033, van delivery, is still on the governor's desk. MLA will push for librarians to contact their legislators to ask him to either sign it or let it pass without his signature when the legislature reconvenes in January. Some legislators feel there is a good possibility that this will happen.
- The state committee looking for \$25 million in cuts has approved all of the cultural agency's proposed cuts. We cut \$29,000 from our budget in response to this request by moving a position into total rather than half federal funding.
- Federal budget update: The Joint Committee's failure to agree on deficit reduction triggered an automatic 10% cut in federal funding. That translates to a \$100,000 cut in our LSTA money. Future Congressional action may mitigate this, but that can not be anticipated or counted on.
- The Friends of Maine State Library have \$6,000 in funds from contributions from board members, the legislature and the Maine Community Fund. Bill Osborne will work on the federal non-profit status paperwork.

## Maine InfoNet Overview and Update - James Jackson Sanborn

- The Maine InfoNet board sees their role as that of collaborating, convening and looking out for libraries across Maine in the technology arena. From a daily perspective, they are technical support for MaineCat and several other technology programs such as the Overdrive Download Library.
- MaineCat is the flagship service and is comprised of several consortia and independent libraries. James gave the commission members a handout diagramming MaineCat and the other services Maine InfoNet supports.
- Discussion centered around the future of MaineCat. There are 2 scenarios:
  1. Stay in the Innovative Interfaces systems with slow growth
  2. Transition away from Innovative into a cloud-based system such as OCLC's WorldCat Local or WMS
- Commission members feel it is essential to set a target date for such a transition and work toward it. James sees the possibility for movement within 6 months. The current Innovative Interfaces contract is up this month but it will take a year to migrate so renewal isn't an issue. The contract

has a no penalty opt out clause. The commission also wants to define the outcome/benefits for libraries not currently involved directly in MaineCat.

## **Discussion of Maine Public Library Definition Commission Members and Public**

- Susan Preece, Director, Topsham Public Library, reported on the work that the District Liaison Committee has done on this topic. She urged the commission to take on this issue.
- The following observations and points were made by Commission members (and others) in the ensuing discussion:
  - A question was raised about the consequences to a library for not meeting the definition. What would happen to their MSLN connection? Janet McKenney indicated that MSLN is funded by the E-rate program which states that libraries have to be LSTA eligible as defined by the state. Linda Lord pointed out that our current definition is basically if the library was on the list after the last E-rate audit, its considered a library. This was by vote of the Library Commission.
  - There are currently 53 libraries operating under 15 hours a week. That's 21% of Maine libraries. Some of these are very close to meeting that particular criterion. Discussion continued that there may or may not be consequences to failing to meet the definition but this gives us the opportunity to talk about quality library services in Maine. We need a discussion on how to bring these libraries forward. A definition can be used by libraries to ask for more support from their communities.
  - Many commissioners felt that the 15 hour requirement is too high and that asking for paid staff is not feasible since so many small libraries struggle for funding from towns now. There is also the possibility of virtual libraries so that relying on a bricks and mortar definition isn't forward looking.
  - The possibility of a tiered structure was raised with rationed service. James Jackson Sanborn pointed out that this approach would make OCLC negotiations easier since a scaled environment is easier to understand.
  - In the recent Ancestry rollout, 41% of the libraries didn't respond to 2 MELIBs posts for information. At least 60 person hours were spent contacting these libraries to get the information needed to make this service work for them. Twenty one libraries have still not been contacted because of lack of phone service or email or no winter hours. This situation highlights the need to spell out clearly how far we will go to make contact with libraries and clearly define where resources go.
  - These kinds of services can be used as carrots to encourage communities to support their libraries in order to keep this type of state funding/support.
  - The commission is uniquely positioned to say what a good library is and what we think is the most appropriate service for the people of Maine. What are we willing to hold up as a public library in Maine?
  - The discussion continued around the paid staff and 15 hours/week requirements.
  - Health care libraries have many volunteer librarians who are supervised by a professional librarian. That is a possible model.
  - Its no longer possible to do everything for everybody. Its critical for communities to have the conversation about whether or not they really want a library. The commission can give them some standards to have the conversation around and then its the community's choice.
  - The dictionary definition of a library is a non-commercial entity often supported by public funds that is open to the public.
- Charlie Campo moved that a subcommittee be appointed to look at a tier structure. There was no second. Discussion continued.
- Some commissioners felt they could support the recommendation if the language was changed to include a governing board with the authority to set policies and hire/appoint a librarian. Others felt that having no paid staff devalues the position and sets a bad precedent that other libraries should have fewer paid staff and more volunteers.

- The discussion turned to the possibility of setting criteria for what it means to be a librarian but that must be done very carefully because it will be insulting to some in the field. Perhaps the choice of words could be different: use expectation instead of definition.
- Dick Thompson moved and Art Turley seconded that the commission form a subcommittee to craft a definition. Beth appointed Jamie Ritter, Art Turley, Dick Thompson and Liz Doucette to the committee. Susan Preece offered the DLC's help if needed. Linda Lord offered help from the consultants and Janet McKenney. The subcommittee will report progress at the next meeting.

## Communications Plan regarding the Public Library Annual Report

Art Turley moved and Kathy Brunjes seconded that the proposed plan be accepted. The motion carried.

## Consultants Report Valerie Osborne and Stephanie Zurinski

- The tri-district board's meeting will be March 31 in Bangor. Eli Neiburger will be the featured speaker. He will speak at a luncheon on March 30 also. We plan to invite the commission, the boards of Minerva, Ursus, and Maine Infonet as well as other interested librarians and library supporters.
- The volunteer manual is now online and includes job descriptions, applications, policies and other documents to help libraries kick off a volunteer program.
- There are now 4 short MARVEL training tutorials available on the MSL website and more are planned. More in-depth training is also in the works.
- The consultants are involved in the planning for the joint MLA/MASL/MSL library conference May 19-22 at University of Maine, Orono. There will be at least 16 hours of programming available in multiple venues. The conference should have something for all types of libraries. The cost per day is \$55 with breaks for registering for multiple days.
- The consultants attended the COSLINE meeting in October where they heard speakers on the future of libraries in the digital age. Much of what is discussed in ALA's Confronting the Future report is actually being done by these speakers. Linda will send a synopsis of this report to the commission.

## BTOP report Janet McKenney

Janet introduced the BTOP trainer Patrick Therrien. Quarterly report highlights include:

- All workstations have been installed
- Training is now the emphasis
- Computer usage expectations are being exceeded
- Use of Learning Express is building each month

One of the biggest pluses of this grant is the statewide and nationwide recognition we are receiving. More and more groups are asking to partner with libraries.

- **Dept. of Labor** - Janet and Patrick are now in direct talks with the executive director of the Bureau of Employment Services. As a result, the Biddeford Library is working directly with them on the Lowes closing. In response to a request from the Career Centers, Patrick produced instructions to help people fill out the unemployment online form.
- **ConnectME Authority** is working with Adult Ed who is sending students to their local library for cards and access to Learning Express Library. The program will be called Get Carded.
- **Get BetterMaine.Org (Maine Health Management Coalition)** partnered with them on a soft launch of the videoconferencing equipment. Portland Public Library was involved in this meeting. It was a good learning experience.

- **National Library of Medicine** - Michelle Eberle is working on training in finding reliable health information.
- **Access for Justice** is gearing up to launch their lawyers in libraries project. The plan is to have lawyers available at set times either face to face or via videoconferencing. This isn't just for low income people but middle income and seniors as well.
- **Maine Fiber Project** - MSL was just contacted today. They are working with the Maine Center for Entrepreneurial Development bringing a Silicon Valley entrepreneur educator to Maine. They want to use the videoconferencing equipment in libraries so that entrepreneurs all over Maine can attend.

## Other Business

- ARRC Funding spreadsheet is in the packet. This will be put on the agenda for the March meeting as the primary topic. Commissioners want to know where the money is being spent. The state library gets no extra funds as an ARRC.
- Commissioners would like to receive the minutes a few days after the meeting so they can review for changes/additions while everything is fresh in their minds. They would also like to receive agendas 2 weeks in advance so there is time for additions or changes.
- There will be no meeting in December. The next meeting is set for Monday, January 9 from 1-3pm. Beth will try to get the agenda out around the first of the year.

Kathy Brunjes moved and Art Turley seconded that the meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 3:01pm.